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ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,
FOR THE YEAR 1925.

TO THE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR THE
BOROUGH OF NEW ROMNEY.

GENTLEMEN,

This year's report is to be a Survey Report, including not only the usual details and statistics for the year under review, but also an account of any changes in the Public Health Services during the past five years. Our area being small and the population remaining practically stationary, there is really very little change to report. The greatest change is at Littlestone, where a number of new houses have been built, these being summer residences for visitors.

We are still short of small houses and cottages for the working classes and this is the class of house which I consider is most urgently required. There are a number of very old houses which I should like to advise you to condemn, but refrain from doing so as there is no alternative accommodation for the tenants.

The area of the Borough is 1,126 acres. The population according to the census of 1921 was 1,605, and as estimated by the Registrar General on 30th June 1925 it was 1,501, being a decrease of 104.

The Borough of New Romney, which is one of the Old Cinque Ports forms a parish of Romney Marsh and adjoins the sea. It is flat and the highest parts are not more than 12—15 feet above sea level. The soil is soft loam, with sand below. There is a little agricultural land in the Borough. It is divided into two parts, the Old Town situated a mile inland and the part at the sea called Littlestone. The Southern Railway has a terminus conveniently situated between the Old Town and Littlestone. Most of the houses in the Old Town are very old, and the houses at Littlestone are modern.

The rain fall is small, compared with the rest of England.

The number of inhabited houses in 1921 was 223 in the Old Town, and 101 in Littlestone, making 324 in all. The number of families, or separate occupiers in the same year was 330.

The Rateable value for the year under review was £8,262 and the sum represented by a rate of 1d. in the £ on the Poor Rate assessable value £32.

The chief occupation of the inhabitants is farming, especially sheep breeding. There is a firm of builders which employs about 60 hands.

Littlestone is entirely a holiday resort and mostly for golfers. There are two golf courses. The sands are a great attraction for children. The whole place is very healthy.

VITAL STATISTICS.

		Males	Females	Total
Births	Legitimate	13	8	= 21
	Illegitimate	0	1	= 1
		13	9	= 22

This gives a birth rate of 14.66 per 1,000 of the estimated population for the year. The birth rate for England and Wales was 18.3 per 1,000 of the total population.

DEATHS.	Males	Females	Total
	4	11	= 15

This gives a death rate of 10.0 per 1000 living persons. The death rate for England and Wales was 12.2 per 1,000 of the total population.

There were no deaths during, or in consequence of childbirth.

There were no deaths of children under 1 year of age.

There were no deaths from Measles (all ages), Whooping Cough (all ages), Pneumonia, Cancer, or Tuberculosis. There were 2 deaths from Influenza. There was no unusual, or excessive mortality.

Notifications of Infectious Diseases.

	Males	Females	Total
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	2	1	... 3
Pneumonia	2	1	... 3
Erysipelas	0	1	... 1

No cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum, Small-pox, Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria, or Puerperal Fever were notified. The case of Erysipelas was admitted to the Isolation Hospital.

There was no special cause of sickness or invalidity during the year 1925.

During the past five years there was an epidemic of influenza, with pneumonia as a complication, in 1924; an epidemic of measles occurred in 1922; and a mild epidemic of influenza in 1921. Otherwise the general health of the Borough has been remarkably good.

There is no occupation which is prejudicial to health.

There is a very small amount of overcrowding owing to the shortage of houses.

There is very little real poverty. Out Door Poor Relief during the year amounted to £1 per week.

There is no special hospital in our district for the treatment of Tuberculosis. Patients suffering from this disease can be sent by their own doctors to see one of the County Tuberculosis Officers, either at Ashford, or Folkestone, or if the patient's condition prevents him travelling the Tuberculosis Officer will visit the patient's home and if he considers Sanatorium treatment advisable, he arranges for this. This service is administered by the County M.O.H.

We have no special hospital for Maternity Cases and Children, other than the Poor Law Infirmary. As regards ordinary infectious diseases, such as Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria and certain others, the Town Council have an arrangement with the Rural District Council of Romney Marsh, for admission of their cases to the Isolation hospital of that Council, and towards the upkeep of which they contribute. This Isolation Hospital is situated near to the town of New Romney, and contains 12 beds. There is also a Special Hospital for Small Pox containing 12 beds and is situated near the other Isolation Hospital, and is administered by the same authority and in the same financial way.

There is a special ambulance for removing infectious cases.

There is no Institutional provision for unmarried mothers, illegitimate children, infants, and homeless children, other than the Poor Law Infirmary.

We have no Maternity and Child Welfare Centres, Day Nurseries, School Clinics, Tuberculosis Dispensary or Treatment Centres for Venereal Diseases locally. The nearest Venereal Clinics are at Ashford and Folkestone.

The nearest general hospitals are at Folkestone and Ashford, practically all our cases go to the former hospital. The Royal Victoria Hospital, Folkestone is supported by Voluntary contributions and our district contributes very well in proportion to the number of cases we send. There is still a delay in getting non-urgent patients into hospital owing to the shortage of beds and there has been no improvement in this respect during the past five years.

There is no special ambulance for removing patients to the general hospitals, but very comfortable and large Motor Cars are available locally. While a special ambulance would undoubtedly be an advantage I do not consider it would warrant the expense.

The Public Health Officers are, the Medical Officer of Health, who is also Medical Officer of Health for the Rural District of Romney Marsh, and the Medical Officer to the Isolation Hospitals. He also engages in private practice. The Sanitary Inspector, who is also Road Surveyor. A contribution towards their Salaries is received from the Imperial Exchequer.

There is no District Nurse. An attempt was made some years ago to form a District Nursing Association for the Borough, but sufficient financial support was not forthcoming. One of the County Health Visitors is attached to the district, she comes under the County M.O.H. but works in co-operation with me.

There is no Midwife practising in our district.

Private Nurses can be obtained from neighbouring towns. Any chemical work required is done by the County Analyst.

LEGISLATION IN FORCE.

There are no special Acts or Orders, neither have any been adopted during the past five years.

SANITARY ADMINISTRATION OF THE AREA.

The Borough derives its water supply from the Littlestone & District Water Company, whose source is from shallow wells on Dungeness beach. It is simply rain water which has filtered through the shingle. It is analysed twice a year by the County Analyst, and is always reported as being of most excellent quality and soft. There is an abundant supply, which did not fail in two very dry summers we had a few years ago. Galvanized iron pipes are used and no injurious solvent action occurs. There are only half a dozen houses which are not connected with the Company's water, they are dependent on wells, apparently without any ill effects, although I do not consider any well water in the district is fit for drinking purposes.

There are no rivers or streams in the district, only a few small ditches in connection with the drainage of the surface water.

DRAINAGE—

The sewage of the old Town is drained into cesspools which are emptied by a Bexley Cart. The closets are hand and automatic flushed water closets. Littlestone is provided with pipe drains and as there is very little fall pumping is necessary to dispose of the sewage into open land drains situated at a part called the Hoy which is not in close vicinity to any houses. Expense prohibits any modern system of drainage at present but if the population should increase to any great extent it would become necessary. The surface water is drained by ditches and is under the control of a special Authority.

A complaint was received in 1924 from the Rural District Council of Romney Marsh, of a foul smell in a ditch in the Parish of St. Martins, which adjoins the Borough. This originated from the discharge of wood tar from a builder's yard situated in the Borough. The explanation being that the wood tar in decomposing used up the oxygen in the water and prevented the dead vegetable matter from decomposing quickly. Notice to abate the nuisance was served on the Owners of the yard, which was done for a time, but unfortunately the nuisance has recurred and notices have again been served.

House refuse is removed by the Council to a place on the Warren, where it is burnt.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The notifiable infectious disease which has been at all prevalent during the past five years was Pneumonia in 1924. I keep a supply of Diphtheritic Antitoxin for immediate use and am authorised by the Council to purchase further supplies when necessary at any time.

Pathological and Bacteriological examinations are carried out at the County Laboratory at Maidstone. I regard this as of very great value as this work when done privately is comparatively costly and an expense which a great many patients could not afford.

I make a practice of going round with the Sanitary Inspector when he makes his periodical inspections and details of these inspections will be found in his report.

The Sanitary condition and water supply of the Schools is under the Kent Education Committee and they appoint their own Medical Officer. There is still a shortage of houses for the working classes. A dozen new ones and a dozen to replace very old property are urgently required. Recently the Council has adopted a scheme which has been approved by the Ministry of Health for the grant of subsidies of £75 per house in respect of houses for the working classes under the Housing etc. Act 1923, and the Council has received the sanction of the Ministry to the sale of certain Corporation Land in $\frac{1}{4}$ acre plots. This will probably encourage the erection of houses of the cottage type.

There is really no serious overcrowding, considering the age of some of the properties, the general standard of housing in the town is good, and we find very few defects, and the owners have always made defects good when requested to do so.

The housing statistics for the year will be found in the Sanitary Inspector's Report which is appended.

INSPECTION & SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

All the milk supply is produced locally and has proved satisfactory. No action was required to be taken as regards tuberculous milk, or tuberculous cattle. No licenses were granted for the sale of milk under Special Designations, classified as in the Fourth Schedule to the milk (Special Designations) Order, 1923. There were no refusals or revocations of registration of retailers or of licences for graded milk. No bacteriological examinations of milk were made.

Meat inspection is carried out by the Sanitary Inspector who is the Officer appointed under the regulations and the statistics will be found in his report. No case of food poisoning occurred.

I would like to thank the Town Clerk and Sanitary Inspector for their willing assistance at all times.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

ARNOLD McMILLAN.

1st May, 1926.

BOROUGH OF NEW ROMNEY.

To the Medical Officer of Health for the Borough of New Romney.

Sir,

I beg herewith to submit my Report for the year ending December 31st, 1925.

Smoke abatement. No action has been necessary.

No action has been needed in regard to houses let in lodgings, offensive trades, or in connection with hop pickers.

Tents, vans and sheds—No action has been found necessary under this Bye-Law.

Inspections.	No. in the district.	No. of visits	Defects.
Bakehouses	3	6	nil
Cowsheds	1	4	do.
Common Lodging Houses	1	2	do.
Slaughter Houses	3	45	do.
Dairies	2	4	do.
Other food preparing places	2	4	do.
Workshops	5	10	do.

No food had to be condemned as unsound.

Bakehouses—The sanitary conditions of bakehouses and other food preparing places is good considering the age of the properties.

	1920	Jan. 1925	Dec. 1925
Registered Slaughter Houses	2	3	3
Licensed Slaughter Houses	nil	nil	nil

HOUSING STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1925.

Number of New Houses erected during the year :—

(a) Total	...	...	...	...	3
(b) With State assistance under the Housing Acts :					
(1) By the Local Authority	...	...	...	...	Nil
(2) By other bodies or persons	...	...	...	...	3

1. Unfit Dwelling Houses.

Inspection—(1)	Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	...	...	...	67
(2)	Number of dwelling houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910, or the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925				69
(3)	Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	...			Nil
(4)	Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	...	...	...	Nil

2. Remedy of defects without services of formal notices.			
	Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers Nil		
3. Action under Statutory Powers.			
A.—Proceedings under Section 3 of the Housing Act, 1925.			
(1)	Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs Nil		
(2)	Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices :— Nil		
	(a)	By owners Nil	
	(b)	By Local Authority in default of owners Nil	
(3)	Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close Nil		
B.—Proceedings under Public Health Act.			
(1)	Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied Nil		
(2)	Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices:—		
	(a)	By owners Nil	
	(b)	By Local Authority in default of owners Nil	
C.—Proceedings under Sections 11, 14 and 15, of the Housing Act, 1925.			
(1)	Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders ... Nil		
(2)	Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made ... Nil		
(3)	Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling houses having been rendered fit Nil		
(4)	Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made Nil		
(5)	Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders Nil		

I am, Sir,

Yours Obediently,

F. SIMMONDS,

Sanitary Inspector,

7th April, 1926.

